

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BUENOS 05655 212218Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----021247 212222Z /62
O 212059Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6627

S E C R E T BUENOS AIRES 5655

STADIS////////////////////////////////

EXDIS

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS AR
SUBJECT US RELATIONS WITH ARGENTINA

REF: STATE 184474

1. AMBASSADOR CONSULTED WITH PRESIDENCY (BA 5534)
ABOUT POSSIBLE VISIT OF JUNTA MEMBERS TO US. RESPONSE
RELAYED THROUGH SECY GENERAL OF ARMY ON EVENING OF JULY
20 WAS THAT IT WOULD PRESENT NO PROBLEM IF GENERAL AGOSTI
WENT TO WASHINGTON AFTER ADMIRAL MASSERA LEAVES JUNTA AND
RETIRES SEPT 15. MASSERA HAS CANCELLED HIS PLANS FOR
A WASHINGTON TRIP. HIS AIDES TOLD US REQUEST FOR HOSPITAL
VISIT WAS NEVER SERIOUS, ONLY PRETEXT TO GO FOR POLITICAL
DISCUSSIONS.

2. WE THINK A SERIOUS AND THOUGHTFUL RESPONSE TO
AGOSTI'S LETTER IS CALLED FOR. AN INVITATION TO VISIT
AFTER SEPT. 15 SHOULD CERTAINLY BE ONE OF THE OPTIONS
FOR RESPONSE. THE ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS
CANNOT BE OVERLOOKED: A) AN INVITATION NOW IS NOT
FEASIBLE: OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS ARE SUCH THAT AGOSTI
WOULD PROBABLY FEEL COMPELLED TO DECLINE IT, SO WE WILL HAVE TO

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HAVE 10 DAYS TO 2 WEEKS TO SEE IF THE ATMOSPHERE COOLS
SUFFICIENTLY TO MAKE AN INVITATION PRACTICAL. B) AS
A JUNTA MEMBER THERE IS THE PRICKLY PROBLEM OF HIS HANDLING
AS A CHIEF OF STATE. GIVEN THE GOA'S HYPERSENSITIVITY
IN THIS AREA, THESE DETAILS WOULD HAVE TO BE AGREED
IN ADVANCE, PROBABLY BEFORE ACCEPTANCE OF THE INVITATION.
HE MIGHT AGREE TO BE RECEIVED AS CHIEF OF THE AIR FORCE,

IF INVITED AS SUCH, BUT SOME RITUAL RECOGNITION OF
HIS JUNTA ROLE MIGHT BE NECESSARY.

3. PERHAPS MORE DIFFICULT WILL BE PROBLEM OF DEALING
WITH EXPECTATION AROUSED BY VISIT. WERE AGOSTI TO VISIT
AND RETURN EMPTY-HANDED WE THINK THE LONG-RANGE EFFECT
WOULD PROBABLY BE NEGATIVE FOR OUR HUMAN RIGHTS OBJECTIVES
AS WELL AS OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. IF THE SITUATION
AT THE TIME WERE TO PERMIT SOME SYMBOLIC US RECOGNITION OF
ARGENTINE PROGRESS ON HUMAN RIGHTS, WE WOULD STRONGLY
URGE AN INVITATION.
CASTRO

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